A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

The Univerſity of CAMBRIDGE,

in ST. MARY's Church,

AT THE

Commencement in the Year 1763.

By SIDNEY SWINNEY, D. D.
Fellow of the Royal and Antiquarian Societies.

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TO THE JEWS.

GENTLEMEN,

AS it is highly probable that ſome of the numerous addreſſes which have from time to time been pointed at you from the preſs, on account of your religious tenets, might have met with a favourable reception had they been penned with leſs acrimony, ſubtlety, and refinement, I venture to ſubmit the following ſhort and plain performance to your peruſal and patronage, in hopes it may meet with favor in your ſight. The honor I have of being known to a lady of diſtinction who was born a Jeweſs, and who is now a ſhining ornament to the Chriſtian faith, encourages me to hope that many amongſt you, as well men as women, might be induced to embrace our moſt holy religion, were you but fairly and candidly reaſoned with concerning the truth of it. That open and ingenuous diſpoſition which I have happily experienced in many of you; and that docility and willingneſs to liſten with patience to what any paſtors of our church may think fit to urge in defence of her doctrine, rites and ceremonies, is no ſmall inducement to me to throw in my mite towards the enlightening

your underſtandings, and enlarging your ideas, in things reſpecting your eternal ſalvation.

You were addreſſed ſome years ſince by one of our moſt learned brethren: whether his dedication was too abſtruſe, too verboſe, or too metaphyſical for the comprehenſion of ordinary capacities I know not; but I verily believe that neither the addreſs, nor the work itſelf, hath contributed in the leaſt degree towards the converſion of a ſingle member from among you to the Chriſtian faith! 'Tis evident therefore that the great work of your ſalvation is not to be accompliſhed by human learning, or man's wiſdom alone; for if it could, nothing, I preſume, would bid fairer for the perfecting of it than the maſterly performance I am now hinting at. We are informed by the holy Evangeliſts, St. Matthew, chap. iii. ver. 4. and St. Mark, chap. i. ver. 6. John the Baptiſt (who was appointed of God to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make his paths ſtraight, Iſaiah, chap. 40.) "had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locuſts and wild honey." Now if the forerunner of the Lord of life, who was to be diſtinguiſhed by the high honor of baptizing his Savior in the river Jordan, was ſo meanly clad and ſo ſparingly fed in the wilderneſs of Judæa, why may not I be permitted to hope that the homely diet, which is here with all humility tendered

to

to you for your *ſpiritual paſſover*, will neither be ridiculed by you, nor be rejected with ſcorn and indignation?

Pardon my preſumption, Sirs; but I cannot help preſaging ſome happy conſequences that may accrue to the Chriſtian church, from the publication of this unlearned and unlabored performance. For it makes its appearance at a time when your minds are not agitated by worldly concerns; when the bill for your general naturalization is neither projecting or depending; nor when your more iraſcible paſſions are ſtimulated by the repeal of an act, from which, with reaſon, you expected to reap all imaginable benefits and advantages. Why it pleaſed the legiſlature to repeal the act itſelf, after it had ſolemnly paſſed into a law, becomes not me to ſuggeſt a reaſon for. But, with due deference I utter it, I verily believe the ſuffering that act to continue in its full force, would contribute more towards the deſirable end of your converſion, than all the books together that ever were written upon the ſubject. Far be it from me to think, that either your Doctors of the Sanhedrim, or you yourſelves, will eaſily ſhake off a yoke under which you have paſſively groaned through ſo many ſucceſſive generations. But when I reflect upon the venerable characters of the DE COSTAS, the SALVADORS, the PEREIRAS, the CAPPADOCES, and numberleſs others amongſt you of upright principles, and integrity of

manners:—Further, when I call to mind the alliances you have made by intermarrying with our proteſtant families, and the little diſguſt ſuch alliances have created amongſt thoſe of you who think and reaſon freely; I cannot but foreſee ſome ſignal and mutual benefits that may redound to us from this riſing, mixed generation.

Trifling indeed are the profits, and inſignificant the commendations that any the moſt eminent preacher amongſt us can expect to reap from the publication of a twelvepenny ſermon: much leſs muſt he hope to eſtabliſh a character under the auſpices of a ſprig of divinity. Will not his bookſeller, when he delivers it to be printed, ingenuouſly tell him that ſuch a grave diſſertation won't do for ſale now-a-days, and adviſe him to write a tragedy or comedy, a piquant pamphlet againſt the adminiſtration, or an intereſting novel? "Look but around you, Sir, and examine if a "ſermon ever ſurvived ſix dull days, although pub-"liſhed by command of the Lords or Commons, "and wrote upon a no leſs important ſubject than "the execution of a royal martyr, the reſtoration of "his moſt bleſſed ſon, or the dire machinations of "Popiſh conſpirators! Nay do not the aggregate "works of very learned clergymen (as well living "as deceaſed) lie moulding upon our ſhelves? Is "not BARROW, TILLOTSON, CLARKE, SHERLOCK, SEED "himſelf, become a dead letter? Do not even

"YORICK'S

" YORICK's inimitable pieces of morality begin to
" grow ſtale, whilſt freſh editions of TOM JONES,
" JONATHAN WILD, and PEREGRINE PICKLE, are per-
" petually preparing for the preſs?"

Permit me, Gentlemen, before I conclude, to acquaint you with the motives that urged me to a publication of this ſermon at the preſent time. And my firſt reaſon for doing it was, becauſe the ſolemn ſeaſon is come, when both Chriſtians and Jews have ſufficient ſcope for praiſe and adoration of the Lord of life: theſe for having been delivered from Ægyptian bondage, and graciouſly conducted by an Almighty Guide, through the Red ſea, towards the land of Canaan; and thoſe, for a ſtill greater memorial of God's goodneſs vouchſafed them by the death and reſurrection of his only Son Chriſt Jeſus, their Lord and Savior.

My ſecond reaſon for publiſhing even at all was, becauſe, as I conceive the arguments I have made uſe of are not entirely deſtitute of reaſon, I could wiſh that thoſe very people who are principally concerned in the matter in diſpute, had opportunity of conſidering and weighing the arguments themſelves. For ſuppoſing the queſtion to be never ſo well managed on my ſide, yet where would be the poſſibility of a ſingle Jew's being convinced of the propriety and force of my arguments, if the performance itſelf

was ſmothered and immured within the precincts of a Chriſtian church?

Should what I now earneſtly invite you to a candid peruſal of contribute in any the ſmalleſt degree towards the opening of your underſtandings; or ſhould I be ſo happy as to be come the humble means of your imbibing one ſingle ray of light into your minds eyes, over and above what it hath already pleaſed the Almighty to illuminate them with, thrice fortunate ſhall I eſteem myſelf in being, under God, the humble inſtrument of your inward peace of mind, whilſt here upon earth, and of your future exaltation and bliſs in the kingdom of Heaven. And ſhould any of your learned Rabbi or other teachers condeſcend ſo far as to favor me with a diſpaſſionate anſwer to my reaſoning, in the following ſheets, I do faithfully engage on my part to combat his objections and weigh his arguments with the ſame candor that I have endeavoured to ſtate my own withal: nay, ſhould he be diſpoſed to carry the diſpute to a ſtill greater heighth, I promiſe to enter the liſts with him, *in an amicable manner;* and the moment I find myſelf worſted by my antagoniſt, I ſhall cry out with old ACESTES, (although from a different motive)

" ——Hîc cæſtus artemque repono." VIRG.

ST. JAMES's STREET,
April 16, 1767.

SIDNEY SWINNEY.

A

SERMON

PREACHED BEFORE

The Univerſity of CAMBRIDGE, &c.

1. Ep. COR. Chap. i. Ver. 23, 24.

But we preach Chriſt crucified; unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Chriſt, the power of God, and the wiſdom of God.

IN the firſt ages of Chriſtianity many were the prejudices and objections againſt a crucified Savior; notwithſtanding which, the primitive Chriſtians conſtantly and courageouſly preached, confeſſed, and gloried in the croſs of Chriſt: and good reaſon indeed

they had, ſeeing God's glory was greatly illuſtrated, and their own eternal ſalvation purchaſed by it.

And it becomes us, in imitation of their example, ſpite of all prejudice and oppoſition, to confeſs and glory in the croſs of Chriſt; while we praiſe and adore the great and wiſe Author of that wonderful myſtery, for the redemption of mankind.

Accordingly, in diſcourſing upon the words of the text, I ſhall firſt conſider the prejudices both of Jews and Gentiles, againſt the ſufferings of Chriſt, and ſhew in what reſpects, and upon what accounts, Chriſt crucified was a *ſtumbling-block* to the Jews, and *fooliſhneſs* to the Greeks.

Secondly, I ſhall endeavour to prove, that notwithſtanding all prejudices and objections to the contrary, Chriſt crucified is *the Power of God, and the Wiſdom of God.*

Firſt, I am to conſider the prejudices both of Jews and Gentiles, againſt the ſufferings of Chriſt, and ſhew in what reſpects, and upon what accounts, Chriſt crucified was a STUMBLING-BLOCK TO THE JEWS.

JEWS.—Hence it will be proper to inquire, firſt, into the true meaning of the expreſſion itſelf.

Now, the word which we tranſlate a STUMBLING-BLOCK, is in the original "σκανδαλον," and is rendered by our tranſlators, ſometimes a ſtumbling-block, and ſometimes an offence, both in the ſame ſignification; which the apoſtle himſelf explains, by a ſynonimous word, in his Epiſtle to the Romans, chap. xiv. ver. 13. "That no man put a STUMBLING-BLOCK, or an OCCASION to fall in his brother's way, "σκανδαλον ἢ προσκομμα." This then is the meaning of the word "σκανδαλον," in its natural ſignification: and it is eaſy to determine what it muſt ſignify, in a SPIRITUAL ſenſe; ſince what falling is to the NATURAL man, the ſame is ſinning to the SPIRITUAL.

And in this ſenſe was Chriſt A STUMBLING-BLOCK TO THE JEWS; an occaſion of their ſinning; of their diſbelieving and rejecting the Lord of life and glory; according to the prediction of Iſaiah, chap. viii. ver. 14, 15. "He ſhall be for a ſanctuary; but for a ſtone of ſtumbling, and for a rock of offence, to both the houſes of Iſrael; for a gin, and for a ſnare to the inhabitants of Jeruſalem: And many among them

ſhall ſtumble, and fall, and be broken, and be ſnared, and be taken:" Which prediction is thus explained by St. Peter, 1 Ep. chap. ii. ver. 7, 8. "Unto you which believe, he is precious; but unto them which be diſobedient (i. e. unto the unbelievers) a ſtone of ſtumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which ſtumble at the word, being diſobedient, or diſbelieving, ἀπειθοῦντες; for ſo the word ἀπειθέω plainly ſignifies, and is ſo rendered by St. John, chap. 3. ver. 36. Chriſt then was an occaſion of ſin to the Jews, by being an occaſion of their infidelity.

Conſider we therefore how it came to paſs, that Chriſt crucified was thus a STUMBLING-BLOCK to the Jews.

And firſt, The mean appearance of our bleſſed Savior in the world, was one cauſe of their infidelity. His living in a continued ſtate of poverty; and dying in all the circumſtances of ignominy and ſcorn, and reproach: this, I ſay, gave great diſguſt to the Jews, as we may learn from St. Matthew and St. Mark, "Whence hath this man this wiſdom, and theſe mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's ſon? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, and his

ſiſters,

ſiſters, are they not all with us? (and conſequently, well known to us, to be poor and illiterate perſons) Whence then hath this man all theſe things? AND THEY WERE OFFENDED AT HIM—"ἐσκανδαλιζοντο", they were *ſcandalized* at the meanneſs of his parentage and outward circumſtances.

But what chiefly added to the prejudices of the Jews, with reſpect to our Savior's mean appearance, was the falſe notion they had imbibed concerning the outward pomp and grandeur of the promiſed Meſſiah. For, being deluded by the miſinterpretation of ſome prophecies in the Old Teſtament, and by the traditions of their elders, they expected that the Meſſiah ſhould have appeared in all the pomp of worldly majeſty and power; ſhould have reſcued them from the ſlavery of the Roman yoke; ſhould have vanquiſhed and deſtroyed all their enemies, and have reigned a triumphant and glorious Prince over a flouriſhing and happy people.

Since therefore theſe were the conceits they had entertained of the promiſed Meſſiah, no wonder they did not believe Jeſus to be that Meſſiah, when he appeared in all the humiliating circumſtances of poverty,

verty and want; when they knew him to be deſcended of ſo mean a parentage, and ſaw that he wanted even the neceſſaries of life (as he tells us of himſelf), "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." No wonder, I ſay, that they ſtarted this queſtion as an unanſwerable objection to his being the promiſed Meſſiah, "Is not this the carpenter's ſon? Certainly then, this can never be that glorious perſon foretold by the Prophets who was to deliver Iſrael."

Whereas they ought to have conſidered, that the ſame perſon, the ſame Meſſiah of whom the Prophets ſpake ſuch glorious things, both with reſpect to the dignity of his perſon, as the Eternal Son of God, and with reſpect to his ſubſequent exaltation, as the reward of his ſufferings, was likewiſe repreſented by them as one of a low and abject condition; *as deſpiſed and rejected of men;* as ſubject to many miſeries and calamities; as derided, perſecuted, and ſlain. *Terms* theſe ſo expreſs and plain; ſo directly oppoſite to what the Jews vainly expected in a temporal deliverer, that I need mention no more; and ſo exactly agreeing with the perſon and ſufferings of our Savior, that *they* muſt be ſtrangely blind and infatuated, not to diſcern Jeſus Chriſt to be the perſon characterized by the Prophets.

But,

But, 2dly, Another cauſe why the Jews were *ſcandalized* at Chriſt crucified, was, the diſſolution thereby of their ceremonial law, and the admiſſion of the Gentiles to equal privileges with themſelves. Now that both theſe particulars were what the Jews in general were greatly offended at, and what the *believing* Jews themſelves could hardly brook, we may learn from ſeveral paſſages recorded in the Acts of the Apoſtles. *This* was the great clamour againſt St. Paul, when he was ſeized by the tumultuous Jews in the Temple, crying out, " Men of Iſrael, help; this is the man that teacheth all men every where, againſt the people, and againſt the law, and this place." Acts, Chap. xxi. ver. 28.

And *this* was the great crime they were ſo highly offended at, when the Apoſtle, in his defence to the people, declared that he had received *this* commiſſion by a voice from heaven, " Depart, for I will ſend thee far hence, unto the Gentiles."

And of the converted Jews, the elders at Jeruſalem informed St. Paul, at his arrival there, " that the many thouſands of Jews which believed were all zealous of the law." Such too were they who taught

the brethren at Antioch, who ſaid, "Except ye be circumciſed after the manner of Moſes, ye cannot be ſaved." And ſuch were thoſe who accuſed St. Peter of preaching to the Gentiles, when ſent to Cornelius and his friends by a viſion from heaven, Acts, ch. xi. ver. 2, 3.

But herein their zeal had ſtrangely blinded them, that they could not diſcern this was no more than what the Prophets and Moſes had ſaid ſhould come to paſs. For thus the Prophet Jeremy had expreſly ſaid, chap. xxxi. ver. 31. "Behold the days come, ſaith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the houſe of Iſrael, and with the houſe of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand, to bring them out of the land of Egypt." In which words, is plainly foretold the promulgation of a new law, different from that which was given them in the wilderneſs.

And as to the calling of the Gentiles; the ſacred writings of the Old Teſtament abound with predictions of it. Thus, when God promiſed the Meſſiah to Abram, he likewiſe promiſed that he ſhould be a

common

common bleſſing to *all mankind:* " In thy ſeed, ſhall all the nations of the earth be bleſſed." Geneſis. And in that famous prophecy of Jacob, we are told, that when " Shiloh ſhall come, unto him ſhould the gathering of the people be." And, to mention but one inſtance more, the very ſame event is foretold by the Prophet Iſaiah, chap. xlix. ver. 6. where God ſpeaking of Chriſt, and promiſing the deliverance and reſtoration of his people Iſrael, by him, adds, " I will alſo give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayeſt be my ſalvation unto the ends of the earth."

But thirdly, If the Jews *had* expected that the promiſed Meſſiah ſhould have introduced a better covenant and a more perfect law, it ſeems that, at leaſt, they expected likewiſe it ſhould have been promulgated, with all that pomp and ceremony, with all thoſe terrible appearances of lightnings and thunderings, and with voices, with which their law had been at firſt promulgated, on Mount Sinai; and the want of this, in the promulgation of the goſpel, was another ground of offence to the Jews; as we may eaſily gather from the words preceding my text, " The Jews, ſaith the Apoſtle, require a ſign."

But are we not told in ſeveral places of the New Teſtament, that the goſpel *was* confirmed with "*ſigns* and *wonders*, and diverſe *miracles?*" What *ſign* then was it the Jews required? This we may learn from that demand of theirs to our Savior, "to ſhew them a *ſign* from *Heaven:*" for they were not ſatisfied with thoſe *ſigns* and *miracles*, which he ſo frequently wrought among them, of healing the ſick, caſting out devils, and raiſing the dead to life; but they demanded a "*ſign* from *Heaven;*" whereby, in all probability, they meant ſome glorious *appearance* in the *Heavens*, which might confirm his authority: ſuch, as when God exhibited himſelf to Moſes in the Cloud of Glory; or as when the law was given to their forefathers, with all the pomp and terror of thunders and lightnings. This, or ſome ſign like this, the Jews demanded of our Savior: but they ſhould have conſidered that thoſe miracles, which he daily wrought in their preſence, gave as full an atteſtation of his divine miſſion as thoſe terrible appearances could do: for were not the healing the ſick, curing the maimed, and raiſing the dead, by his bare word, as pregnant inſtances as could be given of that divine power which, by a word, made the Heavens and laid the foundation of the earth? They ſhould alſo have conſidered that theſe

leſs

leſs amazing, though full as *great* miracles, were far more agreeable to the character which their Prophets had given of the Meſſiah; who was to come in an humble and lowly manner, not in magnificence and ſplendour: "He ſhall not ſtrive, nor cry, neither ſhall any one hear his voice in the ſtreets," ſaith Iſaiah of him, chap. xlii. ver. 2. And they ſhould have conſidered further, that thoſe miracles wrought by Chriſt were the very ſame which the Prophets foretold ſhould be wrought by the Meſſiah. Thus the Prophet Iſaiah, chap. xxxv. ver. 5, 6. "Then the eyes of the blind ſhall be opened, and the ears of the deaf ſhall be unſtopped; then ſhall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb ſing:" to the completion of which, and other prophecies of the ſame kind, our Savior refers the diſciples of John, as a ſufficient proof of his being the promiſed Meſſiah, Matt. chap. xi. ver. 45. "Go and ſhew John again theſe things, which ye do hear, and ſee: the blind receive their ſight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleanſed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raiſed up, and the poor have the goſpel preached unto them."

Laſtly, Chriſt crucified was a STUMBLING-BLOCK to the Jews, becauſe the redemption of mankind, by the

DEATH of their Redeemer, was a myſtery beyond the reach of their conceptions: for they thought it very unlikely, if not impoſſible, that he ſhould deliver Iſrael who could not (for ſo they conſtrued his voluntary ſubmiſſion) deliver himſelf from a painful, and ignominious death. This was urged againſt him by the chief prieſts and elders, while hanging on the croſs, as a ſtrong preſumption, if not an evident demonſtration of his being an impoſtor. "He ſaved others; himſelf he cannot ſave: if he be the King of Iſrael, let him now come down from the croſs and we will believe him." Nothing elſe, it ſeems, could remove their infidelity. Nay *this* even ſtaggered the faith of the diſciples themſelves; for the two diſciples in their way to *Emmaus*, diſcourſing with Jeſus *unknown*, and relating the melancholy moving ſtory of his death and crucifixion, thus deſpondingly add, Luke, chap. xxiv. ver. 25. "But we *truſted* that it had been he who ſhould have redeemed Iſrael:" "*We truſted*, i. e. we *formerly hoped*;" which plainly implies, their preſent hopes were vaniſhed with his death.

But our Savior thus argues in his anſwer to theſe diſconſolate diſciples, "OUGHT NOT CHRIST TO HAVE SUFFERED THESE THINGS, AND THEN TO ENTER INTO

HIS GLORY?" Had they forgot how it was preſignified by many types, and foretold by many expreſs predictions of their Prophets, that the Meſſiah ſhould be ſlain, and become a ſacrifice for the ſins of his people? The Prophet Daniel both foretells his death, and determines the time of it, chap. ix. ver. 26. "After threeſcore and two weeks, (underſtanding thereby ſo many weeks of years) ſhall Meſſiah be cut off, but not for himſelf." And among other his ſufferings, his death is as plainly foretold as words can expreſs it, by the Prophet Iſaiah, chap. liii. "He is brought as a lamb to the ſlaughter: he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the tranſgreſſion of my people was he ſmitten." And to complete all, and convince us that he was really to ſuffer death, his very burial is foretold in the following words, ver. 9. "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death."

And thus I have fully ſhewn upon what account Chriſt crucified was a *ſtumbling-block* to the Jews; and have given a particular anſwer to *their* prejudices out of thoſe ſacred writings, which they themſelves acknowlege to have been divinely inſpired.—I am next

to

to conſider the prejudices of the Gentiles, and why "*Chriſt crucified was fooliſhneſs to the Greeks.*"

And the reaſon of this was much the ſame with that juſt now mentioned, relative to the Jews; for, not underſtanding ſo great a myſtery, they immediately derided it as an egregious piece of folly: as it is too natural a failing of many to ſlight and deride thoſe things which they do not underſtand. Hence, they looked on it as an abſurd practice in the Chriſtians to worſhip *Him* as a *God*, who was lately puniſhed as a *Malefactor*; they eſteemed it a ridiculous vanity, to truſt in *Him* as a *Savior*, who could not *ſave* himſelf (as they judged) from ſuch grievous ſufferings and ſo bitter a death as he underwent. But what very much added to the prejudices of the Gentiles in this reſpect, was, that the Gentile world, and eſpecially the *Grecians*, were, at the time of our Savior's appearing, mightily addicted to the ſtudy of all ſorts of human learning. They were great proficients in philoſophy, both natural and moral: they made very deep reſearches into the ſecrets of nature, and had formed excellent rules for the conduct of their lives. This was with *them* the ſtandard of wiſdom;

dom; according to which they paſſed their judgment on things and perſons, and of which, whatever bore not ſome reſemblance was certain of being rejected, as *fooliſhneſs*. And this is the meaning of the Apoſtle, when he tells us, in the verſe preceding my text, "The Greeks ſeek after wiſdom."—Indeed it muſt be owned, that as far as the dim light of nature could lead them, many of them had made a good progreſs in the ſearch of wiſdom: but their bane was, *thoſe fatal attendants* of *human wiſdom*, *pride* and *ſelf-conceit*; which, according to the Apoſtle's obſervation, 1 Cor. chap. viii. ver. 1. is a natural conſequence of human knowlege, deſtitute of divine grace: "For knowlege, ſaith he, puffeth up:" i. e. it ſwells men up with a vain opinion of their own abilities; as if nothing were too intricate for their ſagacious diſquiſition, nor too high for their piercing judgment! Hence they reject as counterfeit whatever bears not the ſtamp of their own conceptions, and deride as falſe whatever agrees not with their own notions: hence they are impatient of contradiction, and cannot brook the mortifying thought of ever having been in an error.

No wonder then that the Greeks, ſo fam'd for wiſdom, were likewiſe tainted with this vice; or that they would not embrace a religion ſo contradictory to the principles of philoſophy; nor worſhip a crucified Savior, which to human reaſon ſeems ſo great a paradox: no wonder that they would not relinquiſh their own religion, which had been ſo long ſettled, and in which they had been trained up from their youth; for this would have been a tacit confeſſion of their former living in error; a confeſſion too humble for profeſſors of wiſdom to condeſcend to. No wonder they would not renounce thoſe Gods which they and their fathers had worſhipped for many generations, nor turn from thoſe vanities, to ſerve the living and true God.

Hence we plainly diſcover the cauſe of the Gentile infidelity, and why the Pagans eſteemed the croſs of Chriſt *fooliſhneſs:* and we may apply to them, with a very little variation, what the Apoſtle ſays of the Jews in a like caſe, that "going about to eſtabliſh their own wiſdom, they have not ſubmitted themſelves unto the wiſdom which is of God." Rom. chap. x. ver. 3.

And

And it were to be wiſhed that the malignant influences of a conceited wiſdom had extended themſelves no farther than the ancient heathen world: but, to the everlaſting diſhonour of the Chriſtian world, there have riſen up men in *theſe* days who, affecting to be wiſer than their neighbours and to be accounted the only maſters of reaſon, have on that pretence rejected revelation; and becauſe they cannot comprehend they therefore think it not prudent to believe the myſteries contained in it. Bold men! who dare thus to queſtion revealed truths, and oppoſe their ſhallow reaſon to the infallible word of God. Moſt vain attempt of human ſubtlety! to pretend to fathom the depths of and preſcribe limits to Infinite Wiſdom. But the Holy Spirit hath taught us, by the inſpired writings of the Apoſtles, what impartial reaſon muſt readily aſſent to as true, that "the wiſdom of this world is fooliſhneſs with God;" and this brings me to my ſecond general head, wherein I undertook to ſhew that, notwithſtanding all prejudices and objections to the contrary, "*Chriſt crucified* is the *Power of God*, and the *Wiſdom of God*." The meaning of which words is that, whatſoever prejudices either Jews or Gentiles may have entertained againſt Chriſt crucified, all true Chriſtians of every denomination acknowledge

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that herein the *Power* and *Wiſdom of God* was moſt ſignally manifeſted; which I ſhall now endeavour briefly to evince.

And firſt, both the *Power* and *Wiſdom of God*, in *Chriſt crucified*, moſt illuſtriouſly ſhone forth by the wonderful union of the divine and human nature, in one perſon; whereby he who is God from everlaſting to everlaſting was made capable of ſuffering and dying for us, of undergoing the puniſhment due to our ſins, in his fleſh, and of making ample ſatisfaction for them by the dignity of his perſon. For what but *infinite wiſdom* could contrive, and what but *infinite power* could effect an union of natures ſo different and diſproportionate, of mortal and immortal, of finite and infinite, of God and Man!

But, ſecondly, the *Power of God* was manifeſted in *Chriſt crucified* by his ſubſequent reſurrection: for to raiſe the dead is confeſſedly a work of Omnipotence. Now had not Chriſt ſuffered and died, he could not have riſen again, and conſequently, this greateſt evidence of his divine *power* and of his own divine miſſion muſt have been wanting. Certainly this ought to have ſatisfied the ſcruples, and removed the preju-

dices which either Jews or Gentiles might have taken at his crucifixion; for they might rationally have concluded that the *ſame power* which *raiſed* him from *death* might as eaſily have *preſerved* him from it had it not been *preordained*, for wiſe ends of Providence, that he ſhould die. The Jews, therefore, were ſtrangely impoſed on by the deceitfulneſs of their own hearts when they cried, "Let him now come down from the croſs and we will believe him:" for *when* his *divine authority* was evidenced by a *greater* miracle, *that of his reſurrection, ſtill they would not believe.*

Thirdly, the *Power of God* was wonderfully exerted in *Chriſt crucified*, by that victory obtained for us on the croſs, over our ſpiritual enemies, *Sin*, *Death*, and *Satan*, and by the ſalvation of believers purchaſed thereby, according to thoſe aſſertions of St. Paul and others of the Apoſtles, "Chriſt having ſpoiled principalities and powers, made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in his croſs:" "He appeared to put away ſin, by the ſacrifice of himſelf:" "By death he deſtroyed him who hath the power of death, that is, the Devil;" "And delivered

them who, through fear of death, were all their life-time ſubject to bondage."

And herein too did the *Wiſdom of God* eminently appear; for it is certainly befitting the *wiſdom* of a perfect Being, in his diſpenſations, to have an equal regard to all his attributes, and to govern the world agreeably to his *holineſs* and *juſtice*, as well as his *goodneſs*. Now when man, by his diſobedience, had offended his Maker and by that became obnoxious to divine vengeance, God's *goodneſs* prompted him to pardon the ſinner; but his *holineſs* and *juſtice* exacted the puniſhment of ſin. Behold, then, a wonderful expedient found out for the ſatisfaction of *both!* The only begotten Son of God cometh down from heaven, taketh upon him our nature, and ſubſtituteth himſelf in *our* ſtead to undergo the puniſhment due to *our* ſins! He who by the dignity of his perſon, the innocence of his life and his voluntary ſubmiſſion to death, had made an ample ſatisfaction to divine juſtice for ſin! And thus man, through the merits of Chriſt his ſubſtitute, became reconciled to God and was reinſtated in his favour; whereby appeared both the *love* and *goodneſs of God*, towards man in his free pardon, and his utter abhorrence and irreconcileable hatred to ſin, in that he would pardon

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it on no other terms than by the ſufferings and death of his only begotten Son; hereby vindicating the honour and authority of his laws, and teaching us not to treſpaſs on his goodneſs, by continuing in ſin, through hopes of impunity: "For if God ſo ſeverely puniſhed and afflicted the Son of his love," when ſtanding in the *place* of ſinners, ought we not to dread his *juſtice*, as well as adore his *goodneſs*, and to be very careful that we do not provoke him, by continuing in ſin, to give us up to the puniſhment due thereto, even to eternal perdition?

And thus having vindicated the *power* and *wiſdom of God*, I ſhall draw the following inference from what has been ſaid, and ſo conclude.

We ought for ever to admire, adore, and celebrate with praiſes and thankſgivings the infinite *power*, *wiſdom*, and *goodneſs of God*, in contriving ſo wonderful a method for the redemption of mankind, by the death of his Son. A myſtery! replete with wonders: A myſtery! which we can never ſufficiently contemplate upon, nor in this life ever fully comprehend. A myſtery! which St. Peter tells us, "even the Angels themſelves deſire to look into."

A myſtery! for which we are bound to praiſe its great Author, with all the faculties of our ſouls and bodies; with the obedience of our lives, as well as the fruit of our lips.

To him, therefore, who ſent his Son into the world to die for our ſins, and accepted of his ſacrifice upon the croſs for a full expiation of them; and to him who hath loved us and waſhed us from our ſins, in his own blood, let us give continual thanks and praiſe; and let us devoutly join in that hymn of the celeſtial choir, "Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honor, and glory, and bleſſing! and let all the people ſay, Amen, and Amen."

THE END.